

From: Patricia Grall patgrall@icloud.com  
Subject: Re: Note for Dad for Honor Flight  
Date: September 29, 2017 at 7:43 AM  
To: James Grall jamesgrall@icloud.com  
Cc: Patricia Grall patgrall@icloud.com



## Thanks

On Sep 29, 2017, at 7:42 AM, James Grall <jamesgrall@icloud.com> wrote:

Dad

A few weeks ago mom told me that you and Gus were taking part in an Honor Flight to Washington next week. I can't tell you how excited I am that you are going, and especially with such a good friend.

Growing up, I only remember the fun you told about your time in training for Coast Guard, and then in Yap. I am not sure I ever heard you talk about or express any of the sacrifices you had to make, any of the challenges you faced, or anything you regret about your service. Maybe that is intentional, maybe it is human nature. It does not really matter. At a pivotal point in the history of our country and indeed in the history of the world, growing up in a rural town in the Midwest, coming from what were admittedly humble beginnings —you made a choice to enlist in the service of our country, and at a time when the “benefits” that recruits today receive were not nearly as attractive. Perhaps you felt you had no options, perhaps you did it on a bet with Ratdke, who knows. Again, it doesn't matter. What does matter is that you did it and you gave of yourself, your time and energy and all of your mental and physical faculties to serve the nation, the people, and to continue to help safeguard the principles upon which our country still rests today (despite all of the social divisions, and hatred, and lack of leadership by the current administration). You did not see battle in Vietnam, although that conflict raged closer to you than anyone stateside. Having the very knowledge that such a conflict was there and never truly knowing whether you could still end up seeing it, had to weigh heavily on you during that time, and especially during the lonely moments on Yap.

In high school you encouraged me to go to the military; maybe as a way to fund my education, maybe because you thought it would build character, maybe for unknown or unspoken reasons. I never would have gone, you know that, but it is a choice I made and I choice I had the luxury of making. I realize that and know that I am fortunate. For that reason, regardless of my view on any international political, social, religious or other conflict, I will always respect and applaud the men and women who do what you did - give of themselves so that the rest of us can continue to enjoy the way of life we have. Having spent time in so many places around the world where every day is a battle for democracy—and worse, a battle for food, water, life itself—I never forget for a single day how blessed I am. That great city on a hill in a country we call America could have been wiped from its perch many times over the last three centuries, but it remains, and it remains a beacon of hope for millions around the world who can barely begin to fathom the gift that being an American means. It remains today, as it remained after every major conflict of our your lifetime, because of men like you. Perhaps especially because of men like you, who never sought fame or glory, who maybe did not see combat or get wounded, or who did not make the ultimate sacrifice of their life—because you are the unsung warriors. One of the men who served in places like Yap or in a post as seemingly unmilitary in nature as a desk job in Washington. Where, how long, injury or none — none of it matters.

You earned

YOU SERVED.

For that dad, I am proud. I am proud to tell my friends this weekend that you are going on the honor flight; proud to know that you did your part to keep everything we hold dear as a people and nation intact, and that I am one of millions who are able to enjoy the life I have because of the sacrifices you made half a century ago.

I am proud of you and everything you do Dad. I hope the day in Washington was great and that it brought back some terrific memories of our family and time spent there. But most importantly, I hope when you were down on the mall, at the Vietnam Wall, or the WWII memorial, or walking about - I hope you got *that feeling inside* of you that none of us will ever know; that feeling that few can describe nor can they convey its import; that feeling that mom or I cannot, ever know. Only you will know it. I will be thinking of you that day. Go ahead, smile, let a teardrop fall even. Feel the pride, feel grateful, feel sad, and feel anything else this trip conjures up. You earned it.

I love you Dad. Always have, always will.

ej